

VZCZCXYZ0001  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAB #0402 1101726  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 201726Z APR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2846  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 000402

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [IV](#)  
SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: REPORT CARD FOR WEEK 2 OF  
SORO GOVERNMENT

REF: ABIDJAN 374

11. (SBU) SUMMARY After using week one to get his cabinet installed, the respectful and friendly ceremony marking the beginning of the dissolution of the Zone of Confidence (ZOC) and the opening of the Joint Integrated Command Center (ICC) has been the highlight of week two of the Soro government. There has been little movement on other fronts and the agenda is chock-full. Soro has not announced appointments to the key directorships (i.e., customs, ports, and the state-owned media) or his own group of advisors. The decree announcing Soro's powers as Prime Minister is still pending at the Presidency, despite the announcement of cabinet positions the week of April 9. The appointment of the audience foraines (public identification hearings) judges is still in the President's hands. Relaunch of this process depends on the successful redeployment of public administrators (prefects) in the north. Overall mood is one of hopefulness that this new government will move the country forward and get down to the business of governance. END SUMMARY

12. (SBU) At the April 16 ceremonies marking the dissolution of the ZOC and the opening of the ICC, the mood of participants was respectful toward Gbagbo and Soro with congenial banter between the President and the new Prime Minister. President Gbagbo reiterated that the war is over. At one point, the master of ceremonies called on President Gbagbo to speak to the crowd of diplomats and high-level government officials, and the President deferred to Soro, joking that Premiers always precede their Presidents. Soro in brief comments said that his government will get down to the business of governance immediately.

13. (SBU) However, by the end of the week, the agenda for Soro's new government remains chock-full. The decree announcing Soro's powers as Prime Minister is still pending at the Presidency (Note: There are some indications that Soro will not be invested with any special powers, as was widely speculated, and Soro himself wanted, during the Ouaga negotiations. End Note). Soro has not put in place his inner circle of advisors in the Prime Minister's Office, nor made key appointments to the directorships of the ports, customs, the refining company, post or state-owned newspaper Fraternite Matin and state-owned television and radio RTI, all important indicators of the extent of Soro's authority over the government. This week the controversial FPI directors of customs, the ports and oil refining company remain in place and have welcomed Mrs. Gbagbo, who is promoting her new book on the war and the future of Cote d'Ivoire, in grand public receptions at their offices. The refinery director announced 15 million FCFA purchase of the books, but the source of this funding remains obscure. Soro has asked all of Banny's advisors to remain in their positions until he decides the makeup of his office. Most of these advisors are scrambling to try to keep their jobs.

14. (SBU) Soro has indicated that his priority is to implement the identification process of undocumented Ivorians according to the agreement outlined in the Ouagadougou Political Accord (OPA). To date the audiences foraines remain suspended as the Ministry of Justice awaits further instruction from the Soro government. New judges have not yet been appointed as the Ministry of Justice's list of 208 judges for deployment throughout the country has been sitting on the President's desk since December. Last week President Gbagbo announced tha the audience foraines will resume only after public administrators (the prefects and subprefects) have been redeployed in the north. The first group is expected to be redeployed the week of April 23.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: The overall mood is hopeful that the Gbagbo-Soro alliance will get down to the serious business of governance. In short, the new Soro government is up and running and gets passing (but not outstanding) marks for its first two weeks. The overall mood in Cote d'Ivoire is optimism that the Soro government will now get down to the serious business of governing, something this troubled country has not seen for at least six months. END COMMENT  
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